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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

BOYS' DEMONSTRATION WORK.

THE CORN CLUB.

ORGANIZATION AND INSTRUCTION.

This circular is prepared for use in the Southern States, where the boys' demonstration work is supervised by the Office of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work, Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture.

The Boys' Corn Club work in Northern and Western States is under the supervision of the Office of Farm Management, Bureau of Plant Industry.

Rules and regulations governing the age, acreage, basis of award, methods of measurement, and general club requirements are the same in all States. The administration of the club work through these two offices is adapted by them in each case to local conditions.

Boys' Corn Clubs, organized through the efforts of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work of the Bureau of Plant Industry, working largely in cooperation with other forces of the South, have, among other objects, the following:

- (1) To place before the boy, the family, and the community in general an example of crop production under modern scientific methods.

- (2) To prove to the boy, his father, and the community generally that there is more in the soil than the farmer has ever gotten out of it; to inspire the boy with the love of the land by showing him how he can get wealth out of it by tilling it in a better way and keeping an expense account of his undertaking.

(3) To give the boys definite, worthy purposes at an important period in their lives and to stimulate a friendly rivalry among them.

(4) To furnish an actual field example in crop production that will be useful to rural school teachers in vitalizing the work of the school and correlating the teaching of agriculture with actual practice.

Corn was selected for the first demonstrations, because it is a plant that can be profitably produced in most sections of the United States. The boys throughout the country have common knowledge of it from childhood, and the lessons seem easy. Corn yields more food to the acre in most sections of the United States, when properly handled, than any other grain crop. Food for men and animals is one of the first necessities. Cheapness of production is an important item. The growing of more and better corn in the South is necessary for better farm conditions. It forms part of a proper rotation for soil building and will furnish feed for a more extended live-stock industry. It is the foundation crop for home use in most of the Southern States. Its more extensive growth will encourage diversification.

It is not always wise to confine an organization of boys' clubs to the raising of corn. In some sections, especially in western Oklahoma and Texas, where corn is not adapted to the climate, it is advisable to organize boys into Kafir-corn and milo-maize clubs. A few boys' cotton clubs have also been organized upon the same general plans. Where the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work is cooperating with agricultural colleges and with the Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture, some excellent work has been done in organizing boys' pig clubs as an adjunct to the corn-club work.

The Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work is not undertaking the organization of these clubs to teach agriculture in the public schools, but it is seeking through its field force to instruct boys in practical agriculture on the farms. Where this work is being introduced in a county, a county agent of the demonstration work, if there be one, will be found ready to assist in the organization. The cooperation of the State and county superintendents of education and local teachers is solicited. During the past experience of the Department of Agriculture in this work in the South, this cooperation has been given most effectively. The county superintendent and teachers can generally reach the boys in all sections of the county more quickly and effectively than any other agency, and the local farm demonstration agent will be glad to explain the plan to teachers, or to assist the superintendent to explain it to them. The teachers can in turn explain it to the boys and secure the names of

those who wish to be enrolled. The county demonstration agent also will be glad to enroll boys.

It is the policy of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work to cooperate so far as it may with all forces in each of the States working along similar lines, but such arrangements must, of course, accord with the general policy of the United States Department of Agriculture. The Boys' Demonstration Work is simply a part of a system of instruction in agriculture upon the farm. Where local conditions have permitted, arrangements have been made for active cooperation with the extension division of the agricultural colleges, State superintendents of education, and others.

After enrollment of the club members a meeting or meetings of the boys interested should be held, either at the courthouse or at some



FIG. 1.—Typical rally meeting of a Boys' Corn Club.

central place in the county, for the purpose of instruction and organization (fig. 1). It is impossible for the agent to go to each boy's plat and instruct him in person. It must be remembered that the agent has the adult farmer to work with and many other duties taking his time. Efforts will be made, however, to get the county farm-demonstration agent in touch with every boy through a system of group meetings for the purpose of instruction. The cooperation of the school authorities is necessary for this purpose. Such meetings should be held in ample time to give instructions regarding the preparation of soil, selection of seed, fertilizers to be used, methods of planting, cultivating, harvesting, etc. It is estimated that a series of these meetings for each county, held at three different times in the year, will be sufficient to give ample instruction to the boys.

SEED.

As a rule the boys who have selected their own seed corn have made the best records in the corn-club work in the South. With so large an organization it is impossible for the Department of Agriculture to furnish free seed, and such a practice is inadvisable for many reasons. In the organization of clubs in new territory it is permissible for business men to furnish seed to the boys entering the club, but such seed should be purchased from reliable sources and should be carefully selected from varieties grown as nearly as possible in the same locality and adapted to its soil and climatic condi-



FIG. 2.—A Corn-club boy making a field selection of seed under the guidance of a demonstration agent.

tions. After the first year each boy should select his own seed in the field (fig. 2). Seed selected in this way upon the farm is more valuable than seed grown in a distant locality. It is adapted to the climate and the soil, and if carefully selected and preserved will be better than seed brought from a distance.

PRIZES AND PREMIUMS.

If the merchants and other public-spirited citizens have been visited and the work explained to them before the organization of the clubs, it will be found comparatively easy to raise a fund to cover the

expense of giving prizes to the successful contestants. Thousands of dollars have been contributed in this way during the past few years. It must be understood that the United States Department of Agriculture does not furnish any money for prizes and is not offering prizes in this work. In the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work it is found that considerable interest can be added to the work by securing offers of prizes from public-spirited citizens of the community or State. The chief prize in each State has generally been a trip to Washington (fig. 3). The following additional prizes are suggested and have been offered in various States and localities:



FIG. 3.—State prize winners of Boys' Corn Clubs at Washington, D. C., 1910.

Trips to expositions, State and county fairs; scholarships in agricultural colleges and schools; \$50 in gold; \$25; \$10; \$5; a nice buggy; a first-class bicycle; a good 2-horse plow; a double-barreled shotgun; a gold watch; a \$5 hat; a \$15 suit of clothes; an up-to-date corn planter; a ton of good fertilizer; a 2-horse wagon; a pair of registered pigs; a pair of full-blooded chickens; a fine colt; a registered calf; books on agriculture and horticulture; also other articles of utility and worth.

It is better to offer many small prizes than a few large ones, as it furthers the interest if recognition and honor can be given for the excellent records of as many boys as possible. Some boards of trade

and chambers of commerce have made appropriations direct for prizes and some have shown their recognition of the efforts of the clubs by giving the boys banquets and entertaining them at their meetings at the county seats with street car rides and automobile rides, and at fairs and on other occasions clubs have been honored by being invited to march or appear in parades, attracting great attention.

ENROLLMENT—SENDING IN THE NAMES.

Blanks for enrollment will be furnished to the local agents and to superintendents, teachers, and other county leaders in this work.



FIG. 4.—Field meeting of a Boys' Corn Club.

On these lists the names should appear in alphabetical order and such lists should contain only the names of boys who will carry out the instructions. The names of the county, of the club, and of the superintendent, teacher, county agent, or other leader who has enrolled the boys should be put at the top of the list. This list should be prepared in duplicate and forwarded immediately to the State agent in charge of the corn-club work. He will keep one copy and forward the other to the special agent in charge of the Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration Work at Washington, D. C.

CIRCULARS AND BULLETINS.

Circulars of instruction will be mailed to all the boys enrolled, on the preparation of the seed bed, the value and uses of home and commercial fertilizers, planting, cultivation, seed selection, etc. (fig. 4). From time to time circular letters calling special attention to various steps in corn raising will be mailed to each of the boys. The circulars mentioned furnish excellent subject matter for discussion at club meetings or in schools. The United States Department of Agriculture publishes annually a large number of Farmers' Bulle-

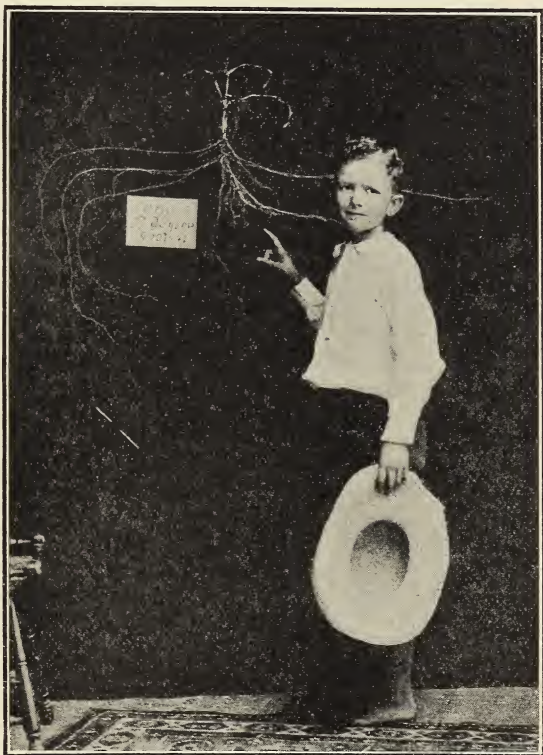


FIG. 5.—Corn-club boy showing root development of corn.

tins which contain most valuable information on many subjects of interest to farmers. From time to time the attention of the members of the club will be called to timely Farmers' Bulletins, which may be had free of charge upon request. Many of the boys study these bulletins and circulars and profit from the lessons and discussions because they are making practical application of the principles taught. The boy learns scientific agriculture because he needs it and not because it is scientific (fig. 5). A boy who has joined the Boys' Corn Club and fails to receive the circulars of instruction on these

various subjects should notify the State agent in charge of the corn-club work in his State, so that the error may be remedied.

The boys will also be furnished with crop-record blanks, detailing a method of keeping an account of the expense of production and specifying the steps to be taken in growing his acre of corn.

RULES OF AWARD.

It is not necessary to have many rules—the fewer the better. A few simple regulations, however, are necessary, in order to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. It is well for the boys to elect their own president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer either in clubs or in county organizations. It is often helpful if these officers, with one or two additional interested parties, constitute an executive committee.

The following rules should be adopted by the clubs, with such modifications to suit local conditions as may be found necessary:

(1) Boys entering clubs and entering contests must be between 10 and 18 years of age on January 1 of any given year.

(2) No boy should be allowed to contest for a prize unless he becomes a member of the club and agrees to submit his reports.

(3) Members of the clubs must agree to study the instructions of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work.

(4) Each boy must plan his own crop and do his own work; if a small boy, he may hire help for heavy plowing in the preparation of the soil. The hearty cooperation of the father of the boy is of great value.

(5) Exhibits of 10 ears, accompanied by a written report and a written account showing the history of the crop, must be made at a place designated for the purpose in the county. Such exhibits may be held on a given day, either at the county fair or, if no fair is held in the county, at the courthouse or some other convenient place.

(6) The land upon which the boy's crop is made must be carefully measured and the corn weighed in the presence of two disinterested witnesses, who shall attest the boy's certificate. This certificate must show that the plat contains 4,840 square yards. The acre should be measured before planting. The crop must grow upon the acre. It is suggested that fairness and uniformity would require that the outside rows do not come nearer than 18 inches from the edge of the acre.

(7) The entire crop of corn from the acre should be weighed when it is in a dry condition. Two 100-pound lots should be weighed from different parts of the plat. Then the corn from these two lots should be shelled and weighed separately. From these figures the average percentage of shelled corn will be found. The total weight of corn in the ear should be multiplied by this percentage and divided by 56 pounds, in order to get the total number of bushels of shelled corn. In every case where the yield exceeds 100 bushels, notice should be sent to the State agent in charge of the Boys' Corn Clubs in the State and to the special agent in charge of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work at Washington, D. C. This should be done immediately. A moisture-tight container will then be sent for a sample of the corn, which will be taken before witnesses, as directed in the circular which will be forwarded to the contestant. This container should be sent through the mails, under

a frank which will accompany it, to the Office of Grain Standardization, Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., where a moisture test will be made, from which the official yield will be determined. All corn contains a certain percentage of moisture, which varies in different climates and under different conditions. It is generally conceded that standard, well-dried shelled corn should contain 12 per cent of moisture. This test is made for the purpose of reducing all these high yields to an even standard, so that no boy will have an advantage on account of an excess of moisture in his corn. Under this plan the same laboratory will make the tests for all the boys, and fair treatment is thus guaranteed.

(8) In awarding prizes the following basis shall be used :

	Per cent.
<i>a.</i> Greatest yield per acre-----	30
<i>b.</i> Best exhibit of 10 ears-----	20
<i>c.</i> Best written account, showing history of the crop-----	20
<i>d.</i> Best showing of profit on investment based on the commercial price of corn-----	30

It is a good plan to have *a*, *b*, and *d* judged by a committee of farm experts and *c* by a committee of school officers or teachers. Their combined judgment in such a case should determine the final results. In estimating the profits, uniform prices should be used. For instance, \$5 per acre for land rental; 10 cents per hour for the work of each boy and 5 cents per hour for each horse; \$2 for a 2-horse load of stable manure, weighing about a ton; \$1 for a 1-horse load of manure, weighing about half a ton; and the market price for commercial fertilizer. This plan of cost accounting has the advantage of great simplicity, but other methods of accounting may be adopted by special arrangement.

It is believed that the Boys' Corn Club work should be progressive, and plans are now under consideration for further systematizing this branch of our work. We feel confident that boys may easily be taught the value of the rotation of crops in building up soil, and that the importance of soil building may be illustrated to them through simple demonstrations in corn-club work. The boy who can take poor land and make the greatest improvement in its fertility and productiveness at the least expenditure of time and money should be entitled to greatest credit. As soon as the details can be perfected, this work will be taken up.

BADGES AND EMBLEMS.

Some clubs have badges of membership in the shape of buttons with the name of the club, name of the county and State, and the year printed or engraved upon them. An emblem or badge has also been designed for the Boy's Corn Clubs, consisting of a book for the background, with a four-leaf clover and a kernel of corn on the book. The word "Demonstrator" appears at the top of the book and the words "Boys' Corn Clubs" at the bottom. Four "H's" appear, one

upon each of the leaves of the four-leaf clover. The book is intended to emphasize the necessity of education and definite knowledge of farm and home interests for better rural life. The kernel of corn denotes the crop being raised, and the clover leaf combined with it is an emblem of the necessity of scientific training, rotation of crops, soil building, and consequent larger education. The four "H's" signify the training of the head, hands, and heart, and health, which are essential to the well-rounded life. The word "Demonstrator" has the same meaning as in our work with the farmer for better farming and signifies that every club member is a demonstrator of the better methods in modern agriculture. These badges or pins are not given out by the Department of Agriculture, but are secured by those interested in the clubs. They are often furnished free to the club members, especially as a reward for excellent work during the season in raising their crops. The cost is very small. In some counties the use of these pins has proved of assistance when given as a prize to every member who raises a crop and makes a final report and exhibit.

ADVANCE WORK.

Boys who have taken prizes in Boys' Corn Clubs have often become interested in the growing of well-selected seed for market. Many of them have gone into other club activities, such as boys' cotton clubs, pig clubs, colt clubs, etc. One of the most interesting organizations is the All-Star Corn Club, which consists at the present time of those boys who have won State prizes and have come to Washington and received diplomas from the Secretary of Agriculture. All boys who win these prize trips and diplomas are eligible for membership in the All-Star Corn Club, the requirements of which are uniform throughout the United States by an arrangement between the Office of Farm Management and the Office of the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work of the Bureau of Plant Industry. The question of eligibility to membership in this All-Star Corn Club is to be determined by a committee consisting of a representative of the State agricultural college (generally the head of the extension work) and the agent of the Bureau of Plant Industry having charge of the work in that section of the United States. A special badge has been designed for boys in this club. Special contests are arranged for members of the All-Star Corn Clubs on larger acreage and advanced work, such as production on larger acreage, rotation of crops, etc.

FAIRS AND EXHIBITS.

Where there is a county fair, the boys' exhibits should be made there if possible (fig. 6). Where there is no county fair, the exhibits

should be collected at the courthouse or some other public place. Exhibits of this sort often lead to the establishment of a county fair, and they stimulate the work and give splendid opportunities for general instruction. Although the club exhibit starts with corn, its development naturally leads to the exhibition of other farm and garden products.

RESULTS.

The object of the boys' demonstration work is the same as that among men, viz, to secure the adoption of better methods of farm-



FIG. 6.—Exhibit of a Boys' Corn Club.

ing and greater yields at less cost. Many of the boys in the clubs who begin to study agriculture in this way will continue the study in the agricultural colleges; others will continue such efforts on their farms, and all of them will make more useful and more efficient citizens. From the pleasant and profitable experience of owning and managing their small plats they will develop into independent, intelligent farmers. The country needs a citizenship, and such a life offers, and for some years will offer, great opportunities. The professions are crowded, and the wage earners must pay high prices for the necessities of life. The wise and judicious producer can enjoy health, wealth, and contentment. Success in this work is good training for

usefulness in any line. The question is, How many boys can be reached and influenced thus to succeed?

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Approved:

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